SPORT ON THE MARSH

THE PLACES TO FIND THE REED BIRD AND ORTOLAN.

To the man with a gun all things are possible during the hunting season. Game purchased in market and cooked at home or at a restaurant tastes good, but it palls into insignificance when compared with that which one kills himself and brings home in triumph from a day in the woods.

It's a long wait to the man with a gun from March to September—from the close of the ducking season in the spring to the opening of the reed bird season in the fall, and "just wait until September" has been the slogan for many weeks.

Washington is particularly favored in its location for gunning—for while a large metropolis, some very fine game country surrounds it, and if one but knows the ropes there can be found within a radius of twenty-five miles plenty of ducks, geese, turkey, woodcock, ruffled grouse, snipe, plover, rabbits, quail, squirrels, and birds and ortolan.

Just at present we are in the midst of our reed bird and ortolan shooting, which yearly ushers in the fall gunning season, and it can truthfully be said that no better region exists for this sport than under the shadow of the dome of the Capitol. To the man with only a few hours to spare there is a wide field to choose from—Four Mile Run, Eastern Branch, Little River—all are excellent localities, and good sport can be had at any one of them, while with a few hours more at his command he can visit the famous marshes on the Patuxent River, twenty miles from here, or those of Mattawoman Creek, near Glymont; Aquia Creek, near Quantico, or Broad Creek, near Mount Vernon. Fortunately (or unfortunately) a $10 license is required to shoot on the Patuxent, but any one is privileged to go there who can put up the price.

Reed birds are not, strictly speaking, game birds, although they are so delicious and afford such good shooting that they are classed as such under the game laws. In point of fact they are no more or less than bobolinks, in a different dress from what we are accustomed to see them in the spring. All summer long at the North the bobolinks and the sora have been providing for our fun (sora rail is the book name for ortolan), and now that he is with us nobody wants to shoot bobolinks—so reed birds and ortolan for ours.

Of all the different kinds of hunting, this is the one in which it seems impossible to carry too much ammunition. Four and five hundred shells are not too many, and the only fear is that with this large number one may wish for more before the day is over. Many persons use a 12-bore gun, but the little 28-gauge so popular now is by far the best gun for this class of sport. For reed-bird shooting, therefore, one wants, besides plenty of ammunition in a big bucket (a regular galvanized iron slop-bucket makes the best receptacle), a pair of hip rubber boots, and a skiff—whether or not to take a pusher is an open and an individual question.

Ortolan are hunted on the same ground, only if one wants to be successful one must follow this rule—either hunt reed birds or hunt ortolan; both cannot be gunned for at once with any satisfaction. Everybody has their own way of hunting, but when one man shows up a measly bunch of a dozen or twenty reed birds, and another, shooting on the same ground, gets twenty dozen, it is not all luck.

First, study the birds a few moments and get their line of flight, for, instead of moving aimlessly about, the whole mass are following a general direction. Now, if you can so place the boat as to get the flight over an open piece of water and drop the birds there, you can have no end of fun for hours at a stretch; if not, you must take your stand in the marsh and work for every one you get. Standing thus, you can shoot birds to your heart's content without shifting your position scarcely at all. Only remember this, never shoot more than one bird at a time—mark him down and never take your eyes off the spot until you have picked him up. If you do, you will wind up by losing more birds than you will get. One place in the tangle of wild oats looks exactly like another, and even when a bird is marked down it is not always an easy matter to walk to him and pick him up; but the above is the only way to be successful—one bird at a time and keep it up. Rarely does a pot shot at a bunch offer itself, and that is not sport.

This method was very aptly illustrated this season in the writer's presence. One man, following it exactly, and for three hours' shooting having over twenty dozen to show, while within a dozen yards of him stood an equally good shot who did twice the shooting, who showed up three dozen.

Reed birds are like some people—their moods change—and after a time the line of flight changes for no apparent cause, and one must change position accordingly. On cloudy, lowery days, they fly low, and if a hard wind is blowing they bed down and stir very little. It is at this time that the pot shot gets in his deadly work and kills more than he finds. Again, during low tide, very few are flying, all being busily engaged in feeding, but just as soon as the tide begins to make they are on the move. Just before sunset is also a favorite time to get in the line of flight, and, strange to say, with the disappearance of the sun beyond the horizon the flight ceases.

For ortolan shooting the modus operandi is very different. Here the services of a pusher are absolutely necessary. With a long pole he stands in the stern of the skiff and pushes it through the wild rice as the tide rises. Ortolan flush only on a rising tide. With a pailful of shells the shooter stands in the bow, braced against the seat, and as the birds jump kills them as fast as he can load and fire. If plentiful, the shooting is fast and furious, and many a time one has to stop in order to let his gun cool off, and when many are shooting at one time it is lots of fun—and sometimes dangerous. The writer has been shot and has shot others, and the sensation in either case is far from pleasant. The business of the pusher is twofold—to push and mark down the dead birds. To the novice, all the marsh looks alike, but with three, four, and even five birds down it is a marvel to see a good pusher find every one of them.

Not every bird that is shot is killed, and a wounded ortolan is a mighty cunning bird. He will float on top of the water until you are just about to grab him, when, quick as a flash, he dives. Often if you watch closely he will come to the surface some feet away from where he disappeared, having swam under water, and just as often you never see him again, although he is only a few feet away with his bill only sticking out of water for breath a moment, when down he goes again. At other times he goes down, hangs on to the grass, and dies there, to come to the surface a few hours later. In such cases, before leaving him to his fate it is a good plan to push the boat sidewise over the spot where he went down. This produces a suction in the water, and sometimes draws him to the surface. The writer has secured many in this way that would otherwise have been hopelessly lost. It is a simple trick, but it is just these simple tricks that go toward making a success or a failure of a day's outing.

On the Patuxent marshes ortolan are very plentiful. Yachts come down with gunning parties from Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, and it is no uncommon thing for several thousand birds to be killed on a tide, and with any decent kind of a tide a single gunner usually gets from 75 to 200.

Ortolan are peculiar in their distribution on a marsh, and with countless myriads present one can push some time without seeing one, while others but a short distance away are shooting as fast as they can cram shells into their guns—then suddenly you run into them. When the shooting gets too hot they very often forsake the marsh entirely and take to the shore, and a marsh that but a short time since was alive with birds will be found absolutely barren. The wise man will remember this, and if the tide is right will skirt the shore edge at dusk. The birds will be working out onto the marsh for the night's feeding, and will flush faster than he can count them.

Scattered here and there on the marsh are beds of the so-called butter weeds, and these as a rule are veritable hotbeds. Being thick, they afford good shelter, and I have seen a man shoot for twenty minutes and not move his boat as many feet. Again, a piece of marsh utterly barren of birds to-day will be alive with them to-morrow, and vice versa, and that, too, on grounds not a thousand yards apart. The pushers are firmly convinced that they come up out of the mud. If you don't believe it, ask them.

There is always the excitement of uncertainty of a day's hunt—of what may be—and this is equally true of a day on the marsh. There are always a number of the big king ortolan present, and one can never tell when a shot at one of these monster rails will offer. If you get one he is as big as half a dozen ordinary rail, and the killing of him is an event to date from. Happy is the man who gets one, and thrice happy was the man who had three as the result of an afternoon's gunning at Four Mile Run last week.

Lastly, when your day's sport is over, tie your reed birds in one bunch, your ortolan in another, and on top place your big king ortolan—if you have one—where everybody can see him, and go home and tell your friends that you have had the best time ever.

FROM WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

"I always avoid that woman because she makes me so uncomfortable with the bitterness of her speech against the women who happen to claim her attention," said a sweet-faced spinster the other day when the uncalled-for criticism of the work of another woman was repeated to her. "That is her failing," she continued; "an unfortunate one that makes her a terror to most fair-minded persons."

Yes, it is unfortunate to have a nature that grudges anybody whatever good fortune may come, that cannot bestow credit where it is due, and takes pride in claiming superior ability and achievement. It stands in the way of advancement and prevents the public from having any hand in making the path to success smooth and pleasant. It makes enemies at every turn, even though the few may do pretty things through fear of a tongue that spares nobody.

* * * *

The women who get the best in life are those who are discreet and tactful and pleasant. A few years ago a girl left her rural home for the city with boundless ambition and no training for the work she was bent upon doing. She had education, however, and a firm belief in her ability to keep a footing if she ever got as far as that, and they finally got her in the coveted position.

* * * *

She was unfortunate enough to attract a man who was placed where he could be of considerable business value to her, and she would have preferred to dispense with his admiration. She really blundered in letting him know that, and then he gave her a lesson which has proved of real value to her. "You should study Mrs. Black," he said, "and learn what a woman may achieve with tact. There is a woman who pleases wherever she goes and her sources of information are numberless and inexhaustible. She will remain at the head of her profession as long as she chooses to work, while you will never get beyond hack worth if you use others as you have seen fit to use me. I have no further business with you."

* * * *

Apologies never healed the breach because the man's vanity was mortally offended. It is a tender spot with the entire sex, but there are degrees of tenderness, of course, and he was in the first class. The girl has remembered the lesson and tried hard to faithfully copy her pattern, but is still miles behind her. The pattern is perfect; the imitator still has to struggle with strong dislikes. There is no room for disagreeable women in the business world, that she knows, but she has to fight against an inclination to resent manners peculiar to the business world and never tolerated in private life.

* * * *

It is easy to get along with one's neighbors in large cities, because they remain strangers, whether they live in the neighborhood one week or one year. In the suburbs, in towns and villages, even in small cities, it requires a deal of tact to steer a smooth course between gossips and disagreeable people. To listen to gossip is to court discomfort, to take part in it is extremely dangerous and decidedly ill-bred. To refuse to listen would engender resentment, so the only other course is to use tact and direct the conversation into other channels without giving offense. The amount of quarreling continually going on testifies to the small number of women who possess tact and patience.

* * * *

I have known families to leave beautiful homes because the strain of maintaining pleasant relations with all the neighbors was too severe. There were warring factions between which they acted as a buffer and the position was nerve-wearing and distressing. They were glad to change to a neighborhood where they knew nobody and wanted to know nobody, even though they had to make many sacrifices, like pure air, a bit of a garden, and quiet sleeping hours. As they could not have everything they wanted, they weighed the disadvantages of both sides and chose the lesser of two evils, as wise people usually do.

BETTY BRADEEN.

NEW HARD-LUCK TALE.

From the Hartford Courant.

An Ontario horse dealer has been telling a hard-luck story to Consul Van Sant, at Kingston. "A month ago," he says, "I bought a carload of horses and shipped them to Toronto. There has been no sale for them, and for the past month I have been paying for twenty horses $12 per day for their stabling. This is losing money pretty fast, and the price goes down every day. The prices are worse than cut in half all around, and the country is flooded with unsalable three and four year olds."

SEATTLE SIXTH CITY IN AREA.

Annexation Adds 12,613 Acres to Metropolis of North Pacific.

From the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

By the annexation of West Seattle, Seattle becomes in point of area the sixth largest city in the United States. The city limits now include seventy-eight square miles, 49,920 acres, of land and water, and in area only New York, New Orleans, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco are larger.

By annexing West Seattle 12,613 acres were taken into the city limits. This is more than equal to the area of Spokane and is nearly equal to that of Milwaukee. The area annexed recently is greater than that of Jersey City, with a population of 219,000, according to a recent bulletin of the United States Census Department. The water area taken in by the annexation is within 869 acres of the land area. By taking in West Seattle 6,710 acres were added to the land area of the city and 5,903 acres to the water area. The total land area of Seattle is now fifty square miles, 32,000 acres, and that of the water twenty-eight miles, 17,920 acres.

By the annexation of the different suburbs the land area of Seattle has been increased from 17,000 acres to 32,000 acres, or nearly doubled. Southeast Seattle added 3,365 acres, Columbia, 401, South Park 625, South Seattle 670, and Ballard 2,300. The area of water has also about doubled.

The cities that exceed Seattle in area according to the United States Census Bureau's statistics, are New York, with 209,000 acres; New Orleans, with 125,000; Chicago, with 122,000; Philadelphia, with 82,000, and San Francisco, with 77,000 acres. Washington, D. C., is next to Seattle, having 44,000 acres in its city limits.

St. Louis, with more than 600,000 population, has an area of 39,276 acres; Boston, with 594,000, has 30,000 acres; Cleveland, with 414,000, has 22,422 acres; Pittsburg, with 345,000, has 19,418 acres; Cincinnati, with 332,000 inhabitants, has 23,616 acres; Detroit, with a population of 309,000, has 18,298 acres; Minneapolis, with 214,000 people, has 34,105 acres, and St. Paul, with 172,000, has 35,483 acres.

USES HIS VOCABULARY.

Editor, Before Quitting Illinois Village, Expresses His Opinion.

From the Chicago Inter Ocean.

Editor James McDonald, of the Girard (Ill.) American, has laid down his pen, having "sold out," or having been "absorbed" by his loathsome contemporary, the nameless sheet over the way. But, before retiring, he has felt it incumbent upon him to say a few things with reference to Girard and its people.

Evidently Editor McDonald has not been appreciated by the community which he has labored so assiduously to serve, else the present state of things would be reversed. And perhaps it is because of a little soreness, growing out of the fact that his loathsome and nameless competitor was able to "absorb" the American, when the community might have enabled the American to do the "absorbing," that he remarks in his valedictory:

In Girard it is not a question whether you are a man of ability. If you are a hypocrite, you will get along without any trouble. If you are a little hypocrite, you will get along pretty well. If you are a big one, you will get to the front in a hurry.

And adds:

For the past five years I have made Girard's faithless husbands and wives behave themselves. There are now existing in Girard happy homes which stand upon a foundation laid by the Girard American which would long since have been a heap of smouldering debris had it not been for my timely warning.

And continues:

A capable man is not appreciated in Girard. It is not a question of whether your work is satisfactory or not. No. It is a question as to what church or society you belong to. Even in a case of life and death a Girard person must have a doctor who belongs to his church. No other doctor will do, even though he knew that the doctor did not know a pill from a doughnut.

And concludes:

When a man engages in business in Girard he must go and join some church. When a clerk is to be hired he must belong to some church. There is but one time in Girard when there are no questions asked. That is when they want to "skin" you.

However, this was Editor McDonald's last chance to "get back" at the town, while the town will have unlimited opportunities of "getting back" at Editor McDonald. Editor McDonald is going away, but the unworthy and unmentionable sheet which "absorbed" the American remains, and, if it cares to do so, can explain fully in one article, or in a series of articles, why Editor McDonald was not appreciated.

French Frock for the Little Girl.

The French long-waisted type of dress is still the favorite for small children, and the dainty little model shown in the sketch will prove particularly pleasing to the mother who takes pride in the smart appearance of her little people—as what American mother does not? The prettily-shaped bertha and Mikado sleeve-cap are noticeable features, these being quite in the latest mode. The dress may be made high in the neck and finished with a standing collar, or it may be cut square and worn either with or without a guimpe. The lining included in the pattern has been specially designed for use as a separate guimpe, if desired, or it may be used in the customary way. A blue-and-ecru striped novelty goods was selected for developing the model, with ecru Bengaline for the bertha, and pale blue China silk for the guimpe, while narrow lace was employed for garniture; but cashmere, challis, or any light-weight fabric would be equally appropriate. In the medium size, 1¼ yards of 32-inch goods will be needed for the guimpe, and 2 yards 42 inches wide for the dress. Five sizes, 2 to 10 years.

A pattern of this may be obtained by inclosing 10 cents in stamps and addressing Pattern Department, The Washington Herald, 734 Fifteenth street northwest, giving number (2677) and size wanted.

THE TWO-SIDED MAN

A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE.

By HELEN ROWLAND.

"Of course, said the Mere Man, skillfully leading the Bachelor Girl to a shadowy corner of the deck and artfully placing two chairs in the very dimmest recess, "if you prefer to sit in the light, every boat, like every question—has two sides."

"So has every man," retorted the Bachelor Girl, taking a chair with sudden decision. "I'm not afraid to sit in the dark with you, Mr. Porter."

"Why not?" demanded the Mere Man, with a touch of unreasonable chagrin. "Do you mean to imply that I'm not dangerous or fascinating, or——"

"Oh, no," rejoined the Bachelor Girl, hastily, "simply that you're sensible."

The Mere Man made a wry face.

"And not sentimental," continued the Bachelor Girl, very sweetly. "It's such a comfort to meet a man on the right side," she added, with a gentle sigh.

"The 'right' side? Of what—forty, or the boat, or the question, or——"

"Of himself," interposed the Bachelor Girl, deftly tucking in the frilly ends of her pleated skirts and leaning back luxuriously in the breeze. "Every man is born a 'Jekyl and Hyde,' a sinner and a saint; and, unless you understand the combination you never can tell when he is going to turn from one to the other; from a nice, sensible, amiable, devoted friend to—to——"

"Well?" the Mere Man flicked his cigarette impatiently.

"To something horrid—a lover or an enemy or——"

"A 'lover' or a—what!"

"They're the same thing, Mr. Porter. As a friend, a man can be as loyal to a woman as to a man—and that is saying everything. As a friend he can be trusted to the uttermost parts of the earth; as a lover, he can't be trusted round the corner. As long as sentiment doesn't enter into the equation or—or the situation—he is the soul of honor and unselfishness; but the minute he begins to flirt with a woman or falls in love with her, it is as if he had swallowed the magic potion and changed to Mr. Hyde over night. He turns as suddenly as a chameleon that has walked from a brown stem to a green leaf."

"Whew!" The Mere Man blew a long puff of smoke. "And yet," he sighed reflectively, "you seem to like it."

"I beg your pardon."

"And are always ready to give us a twist—if we don't turn."

"I don't understand you, Mr. Porter."

"You sit in dark corners with us," pursued the Mere Man reproachfully, "and coax us to go strolling on moonlight nights, and put sachet on your shirtwaists and lace on your petticoats and powder on your noses and poetry and little helpful hints in your conversations, and——"

"I pity a woman," broke in the Bachelor Girl, hastily tucking in a bit of lace that showed above her patent leather pump and trying to smooth back a curl that was blowing across her nose, "who has never had a man chum. She doesn't know what a really fine creature a man can be; how devoted and liberal and honest and interesting——"

"Hear! Hear!" cried the Mere Man, waving his cigarette excitedly.

"A man chum will do anything on earth for a woman; run her errands, forgive her faults, get her out of scrapes, back her against anybody, fight for her, and even, if necessary, lie for her, or——"

"Or to her," suggested the Mere Man sententiously.

"No," declared the Bachelor Girl, sitting up straight and bringing her heels down with a sharp little click. "It is only when a man falls in love with a woman that he begins to lie to her."

"Oh!" The Mere Man dropped his cigarette.

"It is only when he begins to notice the color of her eyes and the way she wears her hair or to take an interest in her ruffles or her elbows that he suddenly dodges over to the other side and becomes elusive and deceitful and critical and moody and unreliable and unmanagable."

"And I always thought," sighed the Mere Man, "that love transformed a man."

"It doesn't," said the Bachelor Girl decidedly. "It deforms him. It affects him just as it did that old couple out West, who were the best of friends for fifty-six years and then got married and fought for the rest of their lives. There wasn't any change in the woman nor even in the man. He just turned around on the seamy side and regarded the woman from a different viewpoint. Somehow sentiment seems to rouse all the fighting instinct in a man. The minute he begins to take a sentimental interest in a woman he gets up on the defensive and sits there. He begins to look at her through a microscope and to see all her faults, to criticise her hats, and to look for the kinks in her temper. He starts to analyze her and to sum her up and to see if 'she'll do.' And everything she does do is misinterpreted. Her simplest and most natural advances are construed as 'pursuit,' her mildest vanities as 'traps,' her very cordiality—— Why, I once knew a man that I could call on at any hour of the day for help or consolation or company, until—until——"

"Go on," said the Mere Man as the Bachelor Girl hesitated.

"Well, until he—got silly."

"Which means?"

"Oh, that we went walking in the moonlight, you know."

"You mean you took him walking in the moonlight."

"And he suddenly noticed the color of my eyes."

"And that changed the color of the whole affair. Where is he now?" added the Mere Man irrelevantly.

The Bachelor Girl sighed.

"He's married, Mr. Porter," she said gently. "But," she went on more cheerfully, "I'm glad I saw the best side of him. Most women never see anything but the seamy side of a man."

"Humph!" growled the Mere Man cynically. "That's because they don't want to. I never saw a woman yet who didn't look hurt or offended when you offered to be a friend to her. And nothing insults one of them worse than letting her know that she doesn't inspire you with any particular sentiment. She considers it a personal affront. Just forget to let a pretty woman know that you admire the turn of her chin or the curve of her waist line and see how quickly she loses interest in you. The average woman doesn't know what friendship is, and, what's more, she doesn't care. She would rather have you talk about the dimple in her cheek than discuss the problem of your life with her; she'd rather hear your opinion on the shape of her instep than your soul's secret. A man may be two-sided; but every woman is one-sided; and"—the Mere Man smiled subtly in the darkness—"and I guess we know which side she's on."

"There!" cried the Bachelor Girl bitterly, "that's what I mean. A man always thinks that a woman likes to be cajoled and flattered and deceived. He has a code of honor toward everybody in the world except the girl he's most interested in. If he could only be as fair and frank and generous and honest in love or flirtation as he is in friendship——"

"What!" cried the Mere Man, sitting up suddenly. "Be frank with the enemy? Lay down your arms and put yourself at the mercy of a creature who is trying to get you on your knees? That would be a joke. Friendship is a truce; but love is war—and the only thing to do is to make the other side surrender first."

"And yet," sighed the Bachelor Girl, smoothing a ruffle on her sleeve contemplatively, "I always thought YOU were the one man who could appreciate a purely platonic affair like—like ours——"

"Oh, ours is different," declared the Mere Man quickly.

"It's just what I've been describing," corrected the Bachelor Girl warmly. "We are awfully fond of one another."

"Awfully." The Mere Man leaned a shade closer to the Bachelor Girl.

"And we tell each other everything."

"Eh? Yes—of course. Everything!" agreed the Mere Man shamelessly.

"And we'd stand by one another through thick and thin."

"To the very altar—I mean the very end."

"And I don't even know the color of your eyes."

"Don't you?" The Mere Man looked disappointed.

"And you've never even noticed that I—that I have a dimple."

"Never!"

"What!"

"And, as far as I know, you haven't any elbows nor any instep at all——"

"You're—you're very unobservant, Mr. Porter." The Bachelor Girl rubbed her elbow thoughtfully.

"Nor the sign of a waist line——"

"Why, I do believe we're docking!" exclaimed the Bachelor Girl, suddenly rising and crossing to the railing.

"We're certainly getting somewhere," acquiesced the Mere Man, leaving his seat with a sign and leaning over the railing beside her.

The Bachelor Girl gazed dreamily out over the water.

"I wonder why——" she began pensively.

"Why what?" The Mere Man looked interested.

"You never noticed—never even tried to flirt with me."

The Mere Man turned and gazed at her in speechless wonder.

"Perhaps," she suggested musingly, "it's because we are on the wrong side——"

"The wrong side of what?" demanded the Mere Man. "Love or——"

"Of the boat, of course!" replied the Bachelor Girl impatiently, as she swept out into the light that streamed from the cabin.

SOUTH HAS ART CLAIM.

William Edward West Once Widely Known Painter.

From the Nashville Tennessean.

An article in a recent issue of Putnam's Monthly on "William Edward West, an Almost Forgotten American Painter," should be of special interest in this city, where many of his portraits are owned, and where he spent the last decade of his life. Mr. West was a Kentuckian by birth and rearing, but spent the largest part of his career abroad, in Italy, Paris, and London. He knew Byron, Shelley, and their circle of friends, and painted portraits of both poets, as well as of the beautiful Countess Guiccioli. He returned to America in 1838 and settled in New York, where he remained for some years, finally coming to Nashville to live with a sister. During his residence here Mr. West painted many portraits, which can be seen in the older homes of the city today. He died here in 1857, and should be remembered still by a few old citizens.